

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: August 9, 2004

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:08 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Attending Members

Joanne Sanders, Chair
Patrice Abdullah
Rozelle Boyd
Vernon Brown
Virginia Cain
Susie Day
Scott Schneider

Absent Members

2005 Budget Hearing

Marion County Auditor
Marion County Children's Guardian Home

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Community Affairs Committee of the City-County Council met on Monday, August 9, 2004. Chair Joanne Sanders called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. with the following members present: Patrice Abdualah, Rozelle Boyd, Vernon Brown, Virginia Cain, Susie Day, and Scott Schneider. Kent Burrow, Chief Financial Officer, represented Council staff.

Chair Sanders explained that she would like to hear the Marion County Children's Guardian Home's budget presentation first.

Marion County Children's Guardian Home County Budget Book, pages D-5 through D-7

Rose Butler, Director, Marion County Children's Guardian Home, summarized that the Guardian Home has been asked the same question as every other agency in the County, which is to look at the budget and figure out how and what to cut. Ms. Butler stated that because their numbers continue to increase, it is nearly impossible for the Guardian Home to make cuts.

Ms. Butler explained that since this time last year the Guardian Home has had an increase of nearly 250 children. In looking at the average daily population, the Guardian Home was averaging approximately 40 children in 2003. She said that the average length in residence, ages 6 and up, is approximately 10.2 days and explained that because they feed and clothe the children this naturally increases the budget.

Councillor Boyd asked what attributed to the 20% increase of the children. Ms. Butler replied that the growing population in Indianapolis includes a percentage that will be involved in the system for abuse and neglect. She noted that there is also a foster parent shortage.

Councillor Cain asked if teenage pregnancy plays into this increase. Ms. Butler stated that this continues to be an ongoing situation that has not changed much over the years. She added that with the current economic climate, many foster parents have to work and cannot afford childcare so there are often foster homes who cannot accept children under the age of 5 or 6 because they cannot afford this type of care expense.

Chair Sanders asked if Ms. Butler foresees there being legislation at the State level in the next session to address this issue. Ms. Butler said she is unsure.

Ms. Butler stated that the Guardian Home is seen as a "new facility" (Guardian Home 2000), but there is still the old building in need. The Guardian Home just had some roof repair done, and private monies were available for this (approximately \$15,000). Additionally there is some basement repair, along with a few other items, and this total is approximately \$65,000. She said that even though they cannot cut their budget, they are trying not to add to it by finding creative funding measures, such as private donors.

Councillor Boyd asked if the Guardian Home normally has success seeking outside funding. Ms. Butler responded that actually outside donors seek out the Guardian Home; unfortunately many times this is in the form of a will. She said there are never regular donations, and they continue to build a relationship with The Guardian Home Foundation.

Ms. Butler noted that the research project to review emergency shelter care has finally begun. The Indiana University School of Social Work has given the Guardian Home a doctoral student.

Chair Sanders asked about children who come to the Guardian Home who may have special needs. Ms. Butler answered that these children require much care, and this is a situation that requires ongoing attention. Chair Sanders asked if the Guardian Home has been able to maintain compliance with the State. Ms. Butler responded in the affirmative, although she said that the Nursery is hard to keep staffed.

Chair Sanders asked if Ms. Butler has much contact with directors from other parts of the state who work in similar settings, Ms. Butler responded that with regard to emergency shelter homes, the Guardian Home is a "unique animal,- She said there are other shelters, but most of them are at 25 or less. A lot of the shelters do not have nurseries either because of State regulations.

Other than the previous requests that have been made, Ms. Butler said there are really no changes in the proposed 2005 budget. Chair Sanders said that she is showing a total request of \$2.3 million and expressed concern over it. County Auditor, Marty Womacks, stated that this is pretty cut and dry except for a 27th pay period, noting that it is a very tight budget. Chair Sanders said she is concerned over a fuel cost increase. Ms. Butler responded that last year the Guardian Home had to come back before the Committee to request this.

With regard to the repairs that are listed, Chair Sanders asked if she were to contact the Central Indiana Building Trades Council to elect volunteer help, are there particular ones that Ms. Butler could designate as priority. Ms. Butler stated that the windows and the doors to the gym are long overdue for work.

Chair Sanders thanked Ms. Butler for her presentation and said she would discuss alterations in the budget with the Auditor.

Marion County Auditor

Ms. Womacks stated that two agencies within her budget are Noble of Indiana and the Marion County Fair Board. She said in her speech before the Council last week that difficult choices would have to be made this year. She said that she has submitted a

baseline budget for 2005 and has not included any subsidies. She added that she is aware her recommendations are painful, and she is not pleased to be in this position, so she is receptive to any additional recommendations.

Chair Sanders asked if she understood correctly that the Marion County Fair Board will no longer receive anything in the 2005 budget. Ms. Womacks responded there is nothing for the Fair Board, Noble of Indiana, or the Marion County Cooperative Extension Service.

Chair Sanders referred to page C-9 of the County Budget Book (Auditor's Budget). She pointed out Line Item #380, Subsidies. Ms. Womacks commented that on Friday, August 6th at the joint Administration & Finance/Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee meeting, it was mentioned that one way to balance the budget for 2004 was from a payment to one of the mental health agencies. Health & Hospital has agreed to accept this money, and that is why the amount for next year appears similar to this year. Chair Sanders asked what the total 2005 payment will be for mental health. Ms. Womacks responded that the figure is \$2,697,500.

Chair Sanders asked for a breakdown of Line Item #390, Other Services and Charges. Ms. Womacks said there are a variety of contracts, and she would provide more detailed information to the Committee shortly.

Chair Sanders mentioned the Department of Corrections payments that "loom larger each year", which are not being made to the State. She asked where they would fall in the budget if they were included. Ms. Womacks responded that they would be in the Character 03 budget.

Chair Sanders asked where there are large expenditures that can be assessed to the Auditor's budget that are from another agency. Ms. Womacks replied that there are some from Information Services Agency. Chair Sanders asked what type of negotiations were held with the agencies and directors. Ms. Womacks said they were decisions that were essential and courtesy calls were made. She said there were some brief discussions, although she does not recall specific details. Chair Sanders asked if it is Ms. Womacks' understanding that all who know they will be cut have been made aware of this. Ms. Womacks responded in the affirmative.

Terry Nelson, Chief Deputy Auditor, referenced to items in the Auditor's budget that are County-wide as opposed to just the Auditor's Office. The first is in Character 01, Special Pay and Compensation. He said this amount is a fringe benefit for employees who do not pay health insurance. The second item is in Character 03, Refunds, Awards, and Indemnities. He said that the Auditor pays judgements on a County-wide basis out of this fund. Chair Sanders asked for an example. Mr. Nelson said that primarily in the Sheriff's Department if some type of action has been filed against the County or Sheriff, it would be paid from this fund.

Community Affairs Committee
August 9, 2004
Page Four

Ms. Womacks added that the Auditor's Office has to anticipate a listing from the Office of Corporation Counsel that tells what is pending.

Chair Sanders thanked all in attendance.

With no further business pending, and upon motion duly made, the Community Affairs Committee of the City-County Council was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Sanders, Chair
Community Affairs Committee

JS/hfs

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Joanne Sanders", is written over a horizontal line.

